

LETTERS
OF
MESSRS. CLAY, BENTON, AND BARROW,
ON THE SUBJECT OF THE
ANNEXATION OF TEXAS TO THE UNITED STATES.

MR. CLAY'S LETTER.

RALEIGH, April 17, 1844.

To the Editors of the National Intelligencer :

GENTLEMEN: Subsequent to my departure from Ashland, in December last, I received various communications from popular assemblages and private individuals, requesting an expression of my opinion upon the question of the annexation of Texas to the United States. I have forborne to reply to them, because it was not very convenient, during the progress of my journey, to do so, and for other reasons. I did not think it proper, unnecessarily, to introduce at present a new element among the other exciting subjects which agitate and engross the public mind. The rejection of the overture of Texas, some years ago, to become annexed to the United States, had met with general acquiescence. Nothing had since occurred materially to vary the question. I had seen no evidence of a desire being entertained, on the part of any considerable portion of the American people, that Texas should become an integral part of the United States. During my sojourn in New Orleans, I had, indeed, been greatly surprised, by information which I received from Texas; that, in the course of last fall, a voluntary overture had proceeded from the Executive of the United States to the authorities of Texas, to conclude a treaty of annexation; and that, in order to overcome the repugnance felt by any of them to a negotiation upon the subject, strong, and, as I believed, erroneous representations had been made to them of a state of opinion in the Senate of the United States favorable to the ratification of such a treaty. According to these representations, it had been ascertained that a number of Senators, varying from thirty-five to forty-two, were ready to sanction such a treaty. I was aware, too, that holders of Texas lands and Texas scrip, and speculators in them, were actively engaged in promoting the object of annexation. Still, I did not believe that any Executive of the United States would venture upon so grave and momentous a proceeding, not only without any general manifestation of public opinion in favor of it, but in direct opposition to strong and decided expressions of public disapprobation. But it appears that I was mistaken. To the astonishment of the whole nation, we are now informed that a treaty of annexation has been actually concluded, and is to be submitted to the Senate for its consideration. The motives for my silence, therefore, no longer remain, and I feel it to be my duty to present an exposition of my views and opinions upon the question, for what they may be worth, to the public consideration. I adopt this method, as being more convenient than several replies to the respective communications which I have received.

I regret that I have not the advantage of a view of the treaty itself, so as to enable me to adapt an expression of my opinion to the actual conditions and stipulations which it contains. Not possessing that opportunity, I am constrained to treat the question according to what I presume to be the terms of the treaty. If, without the loss of national character, without the hazard of foreign war, with the general concurrence of the nation, without any danger to the integrity of the Union, and without giving an unreasonable price for Texas, the question of annexation were presented, it would appear in quite a different light from that in which, I apprehend, it is now to be regarded.

The United States acquired a title to Texas, extending, as I believe, to the Rio del Norte, by the treaty of Louisiana. They ceded and relinquished that title to Spain by the treaty of 1819, by which the Sabine was substituted for the Rio del Norte as our western boundary. This treaty was negotiated under the administration of Mr. Monroe, and with the concurrence of his Cabinet, of which Messrs. Crawford, Calhoun, and Wirt, being a majority, all Southern gentlemen, composed a part. When the treaty was laid before the House of Representatives, being a member of that body, I expressed the opinion, which I then entertained, and still hold, that Texas was sacrificed to the acquisition of Florida. We wanted Florida; but I thought it must, from its position, inevitably fall into our possession; that the point of a few years, sooner or later, was of no sort of consequence, and that, in giving five millions of dollars and Texas for it, we gave more than a just equivalent. But, if we made a great sacrifice in the surrender of Texas, we ought to take care not to make too great a sacrifice in the attempt to reacquire it.

My opinions of the inexpediency of the treaty of 1819 did not prevail. The country and Congress were satisfied with it, appropriations were made to carry it into effect, the line of the Sabine was recognised by us as our boundary, in negotiations both with Spain and Mexico, after Mexico became independent, and measures have been in actual progress to mark the line, from the Sabine to Red river, and thence to the Pacific ocean. We have thus fairly alienated our title to Texas, by solemn national compacts, to the fulfilment of which we stand bound by good faith and national honor. It is therefore perfectly idle and ridiculous, if not dishonorable, to talk of resuming our title to Texas, as if we had never parted with it. We can no more do that than Spain can resume Florida, France Louisiana, or Great Britain the thirteen colonies now composing a part of the United States.

During the administration of Mr. Adams, Mr. Poinsett, minister of the United States at Mexico, was instructed by me, with the President's authority, to propose a repurchase of Texas; but he forbore even to make an overture for that purpose. Upon his return to the United States, he informed me, at New Orleans, that his reason for not making it was, that he knew the purchase was wholly impracticable, and that he was persuaded that, if he made the overture, it would have no other effect than to aggravate irritations, already existing, upon matters of difference between the two countries.

The events which have since transpired in Texas are well known. She revolted against the Government of Mexico, flew to arms, and finally fought and won the memorable battle of San Jacinto, annihilating a Mexican army, and making a captive of the Mexican President. The signal success of that Revolution was greatly aided, if not wholly achieved, by citizens of the United States who had migrated to Texas. These succors, if they could not always be prevented by the Government of the United States, were furnished in a manner and to an extent which brought upon us some national reproach in the eyes of an impartial world. And, in my opinion, they impose on us the obligation of scrupulously avoiding the imputation of having instigated and aided the revolution with the ultimate view of territorial aggrandizement. After the battle of San Jacinto, the United States recognised the independence of Texas, in conformity with the principle and practice which have always prevailed in their councils of recognising the Government "de

facto," without regarding the question *de jure*. That recognition did not affect or impair the rights of Mexico, or change the relations which existed between her and Texas. She, on the contrary, has preserved all her rights, and has continued to assert, and so far as I know yet asserts, her right to reduce Texas to obedience, as a part of the Republic of Mexico. According to late intelligence, it is probable that she has agreed upon a temporary suspension of hostilities; but, if that has been done, I presume it is with the purpose, upon the termination of the armistice, of renewing the war and enforcing her rights, as she considers them.

This narrative shows the present actual condition of Texas, so far as I have information about it. If it be correct, Mexico has not abandoned, but perseveres in the assertion of her rights by actual force of arms, which, if suspended, are intended to be renewed. Under these circumstances, if the Government of the United States were to acquire Texas, it would acquire along with it all the encumbrances which Texas is under, and among them the actual or suspended war between Mexico and Texas. Of that consequence there cannot be a doubt. Annexation and war with Mexico are identical. Now, for one, I certainly am not willing to involve this country in a foreign war for the object of acquiring Texas. I know there are those who regard such a war with indifference, and as a trifling affair, on account of the weakness of Mexico, and her inability to inflict serious injury upon this country. But I do not look upon it thus lightly. I regard all wars as great calamities, to be avoided, if possible, and honorable peace as the wisest and truest policy of this country. What the United States most need are, union, peace, and patience. Nor do I think that the weakness of a Power should form a motive, in any case, for inducing us to engage in or to depreciate the evils of war. Honor and good faith and justice are equally due from this country towards the weak as towards the strong. And if an act of injustice were to be perpetrated towards any Power, it would be more compatible with the dignity of the nation, and, in my judgment, less dishonorable, to inflict it upon a powerful instead of a weak foreign nation. But are we perfectly sure that we should be free from injury in a state of war with Mexico? Have we any security that countless numbers of foreign vessels, under the authority and flag of Mexico, would not prey upon our defenceless commerce in the Mexican gulf, on the Pacific ocean, and on every other sea and ocean? What commerce, on the other hand, does Mexico offer, as an indemnity for our losses, to the gallantry and enterprise of our countrymen? This view of the subject supposes that the war would be confined to the United States and Mexico, as the only belligerents. But have we any certain guaranty that Mexico would obtain no allies among the great European Powers? Suppose any such Powers, jealous of our increasing greatness, and disposed to check our growth and cripple us, were to take part in behalf of Mexico in the war, how would the different belligerents present themselves to Christendom and the enlightened world? We have been seriously charged with an inordinate spirit of territorial aggrandizement; and, without admitting the justice of the charge, it must be owned that we have made vast acquisitions of territory within the last forty years. Suppose Great Britain and France, or one of them, were to take part with Mexico, and, by a manifesto, were to proclaim that their objects were to assist a weak and helpless ally to check the spirit of encroachment and ambition of an already overgrown Republic, seeking still further acquisitions of territory, to maintain the independence of Texas, disconnected with the United States, and to prevent the further propagation of slavery from the United States, what would be the effect of such allegations upon the judgment of an impartial and enlightened world?

Assuming that the annexation of Texas is war with Mexico, is it competent to the treaty-making power to plunge this country into war, not only without the concurrence of, but without deigning to consult Congress, to which, by the Constitution, belongs exclusively the power of declaring war?

I have hitherto considered the question upon the supposition that the annexation

is attempted without the assent of Mexico. If she yields her consent, that would materially affect the foreign aspect of the question, if it did not remove all foreign difficulties. On the assumption of that assent, the question would be confined to the domestic considerations which belong to it, embracing the terms and conditions upon which annexation is proposed. I do not think that Texas ought to be received into the Union, as an integral part of it, in decided opposition to the wishes of a considerable and respectable portion of the Confederacy. I think it far more wise and important to compose and harmonize the present Confederacy, as it now exists, than to introduce a new element of discord and distraction into it. In my humble opinion, it should be the constant and earnest endeavor of American statesmen to eradicate prejudices, to cultivate and foster concord, and to produce general contentment among all parts of our Confederacy. And true wisdom, it seems to me, points to the duty of rendering its present members happy, prosperous, and satisfied with each other, rather than to attempt to introduce alien members, against the common consent and with the certainty of deep dissatisfaction. Mr. Jefferson expressed the opinion, and others believed, that it never was in the contemplation of the framers of the Constitution to add foreign territory to the Confederacy, out of which new States were to be formed. The acquisitions of Louisiana and Florida may be defended upon the peculiar ground of the relation in which they stood to the States of the Union. After they were admitted, we might well pause awhile, people our vast wastes, develop our resources, prepare the means of defending what we possess, and augment our strength, power, and greatness. If hereafter further territory should be wanted for an increased population, we need entertain no apprehensions but that it will be acquired by means, it is to be hoped, fair, honorable, and constitutional.

It is useless to disguise that there are those who espouse and those who oppose the annexation of Texas upon the ground of the influence which it would exert, in the balance of political power, between two great sections of the Union. I conceive that no motive for the acquisition of foreign territory would be more unfortunate, or pregnant with more fatal consequences, than that of obtaining it for the purpose of strengthening one part against another part of the common Confederacy. Such a principle, put into practical operation, would menace the existence, if it did not certainly sow the seeds of a dissolution of the Union. It would be to proclaim to the world an insatiable and unquenchable thirst for foreign conquest or acquisition of territory. For if to-day Texas be acquired to strengthen one part of the Confederacy, to-morrow Canada may be required to add strength to another. And, after that might have been obtained, still other and further acquisitions would become necessary, to equalize and adjust the balance of political power. Finally, in the progress of this spirit of universal dominion, the part of the Confederacy which is now weakest would find itself still weaker from the impossibility of securing new theatres for those peculiar institutions which it is charged with being desirous to extend.

But would Texas, ultimately, really add strength to that which is now considered the weakest part of the Confederacy? If my information be correct, it would not. According to that, the territory of Texas is susceptible of a division into five States of convenient size and form. Of these, two only would be adapted to those peculiar institutions to which I have referred, and the other three, lying west and north of San Antonio, being only adapted to farming and grazing purposes, from the nature of their soil, climate, and productions, would not admit of those institutions. In the end, therefore, there would be two slave and three free States probably added to the Union. If this view of the soil and geography of Texas be correct, it might serve to diminish the zeal both of those who oppose and those who are urging annexation.

Should Texas be annexed to the Union, the United States will assume and become responsible for the debt of Texas, be its amount what it may. What it is, I

do not know certainly ; but the least I have seen it stated at is thirteen millions of dollars. And this responsibility will exist, whether there be a stipulation in the treaty or not expressly assuming the payment of the debt of Texas. For I suppose it to be undeniable, that, if one nation becomes incorporated in another, all the debts, and obligations, and encumbrances, and wars, of the incorporated nation, become the debts, and obligations, and encumbrances, and wars, of the common nation created by the incorporation.

If any European nation entertains any ambitious designs upon Texas, such as that of colonizing her, or in any way subjugating her, I should regard it as the imperative duty of the Government of the United States to oppose to such designs the most firm and determined resistance, to the extent, if necessary, of appealing to arms to prevent the accomplishment of any such designs. The Executive of the United States ought to be informed as to the aims and views of foreign Powers with regard to Texas; and I presume that, if there be any of the exceptionable character which I have indicated, the Executive will disclose to the co-ordinate departments of the Government, if not to the public, the evidence of them. From what I have seen and heard, I believe that Great Britain has recently formally and solemnly disavowed any such aims or purposes—has declared that she is desirous only of the independence of Texas, and that she has no intention to interfere in her domestic institutions. If she has made such disavowal and declaration, I presume they are in the possession of the Executive.

In the future progress of events, it is probable that there will be a voluntary or forcible separation of the British North American possessions from the parent country. I am strongly inclined to think that it will be best for the happiness of all parties, that, in that event, they should be erected into a separate and independent Republic. With the Canadian Republic on one side, that of Texas on the other, and the United States, the friend of both, between them, each could advance its own happiness by such constitutions, laws, and measures, as were best adapted to its peculiar condition. They would be natural allies, ready, by co-operation, to repel any European or foreign attack upon either. Each would afford a secure refuge to the persecuted and oppressed, driven into exile by either of the others. They would emulate each other in improvements, in free institutions, and in the science of self-government. Whilst Texas has adopted our Constitution as a model of hers, she has, in several important particulars, greatly improved upon it.

Although I have felt compelled, from the nature of the inquiries addressed to me, to extend this communication to a much greater length than I could have wished, I could not do justice to the subject, and fairly and fully expose my own opinions, in a shorter space. In conclusion, they may be stated in a few words to be, that I consider the annexation of Texas, at this time, without the assent of Mexico, as a measure compromising the national character, involving us certainly in war with Mexico, probably with other foreign Powers, dangerous to the integrity of the Union, inexpedient in the present financial condition of the country, and not called for by any general expression of public opinion.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. CLAY.

MR. BENTON'S LETTER.

Letter from Senator Benton to the members of the Texan Congress, in answer to their communication to him, expressing the wish of Texas to be admitted into the American Union.

WASHINGTON CITY, April 30, 1844.

GENTLEMEN: I have seen in the newspapers the published copy of your communication to me, intended for the information of the American Congress, and expressing the desire of Texas to be admitted into the American Union, and shall take pleasure in using the original, whenever it shall arrive, according to your wishes. I say when it shall arrive; for this original has not yet come to my hands, and therefore cannot now be communicated to Congress; and the copy being published during my brief absence from the city, I feel myself laid under the necessity of giving a public answer to your letter, in order to avoid the appearance of a disrespectful inattention to your request.

You have judged rightly, gentlemen, in addressing your communication to me, and proposing to make me the organ of your wishes to the American Congress, being, as I am, the first opponent of the treaty which dismembered your territory from our Union, the first advocate for its recovery, the supporter of all prudent measures for that purpose, the enemy of all movements which would involve the question in sectional or partisan politics, and the firm believer in the speedy and happy recovery of the dismembered territory, and the mutilated rivers, if the question could be kept free from improper connexions, and confined to the patriotic basis of nationality and honor.

I was a member of the bar in St. Louis, in the then Territory of Missouri, in the year 1818, when the newspapers announced the progress of the treaty, which was signed in the February following, and which threw away Texas, dismembered the valley of the Mississippi, mutilated two of our noblest rivers, brought a foreign boundary to the neighborhood of New Orleans, and established a desert barrier between Missouri and Mexico, to interrupt their trade, and shelter the depredators upon the lives and property of their citizens. I was not then in politics, and had nothing to do with public affairs; but I saw and felt at once the whole enormity of this gratuitous and unaccountable sacrifice, and instantly raised my voice against it in articles published in the St. Louis papers, and in which were given in advance all the *national* reasons against throwing away the country, which are now, after a lapse of twenty-five years, given by others for getting it back. I was young and ardent then, and had some fire in me, and not only wrote against the treaty but against its authors and their motives, and even imprecated a *wo* upon the heads of the statesmen who should continue to favor it.* Mr. Adams, the negotiator and the ostensible author of the treaty, was the statesman against whom all my censure was directed, and I was certainly sincere in my then belief of his great culpability; but the declaration which he has lately made on the floor of the House of Representatives absolves him from all censure on account of that treaty, and places the blame on the majority of Mr. Monroe's Cabinet, by whose votes he was governed, contrary to his own opinions, in establishing the boundary which I so much condemned.

The voice of a mere individual, not in any public station, and a thousand miles from the seat of Government, was no impediment to the progress of the treaty; it went forward, was signed in the month of February, 1819, approved by Mr. Monroe's Cabinet, unanimously ratified by the Senate, and greeted with the universal applause of the public press.

* "The magnificent valley of the Mississippi is ours, with all its fountains, springs, and floods, and wo to the statesman that shall undertake to surrender one drop of its water, one inch of its soil, to any foreign Power."—*St. Louis Enquirer*, 1818.

But all this concurrence of authorities and of applause made no impression upon me. I continued to look upon the treaty with indignation and amazement, and the more so because the published correspondence showed that the sacrifice of our territory was gratuitous and wanton, that the Spanish Government had offered us more than we had accepted, that we had voluntarily sacrificed our rivers, boundaries, and territory; and I continued to assail the treaty, under the confident belief that such an unnatural boundary could not stand, and that the sacrificed territory would eventually be restored to the country from which it had been torn.

The treaty of 1819, between the United States and Spain, so far as it applied to the southwestern boundary of the United States, was one of the most gratuitous sacrifices ever made by a nation which was not conquered, and actually occupied by a conquering army. It gave up a natural boundary—a great river, a desert, and a mountain—on the most vulnerable flank of the Union—the flank conterminous with the largest foreign Power on our continent, and proximate to one of our greatest and most exposed cities. Instead of this natural boundary, far removed from our cities and population, it substituted an arbitrary line, under a longitude far in the interior of our country, and along rivers wholly within our natural boundaries, and incapable of being fortified except at an expense of hundreds of millions. It gave up 300,000 square miles of territory, enough to make five or six great States, and all of it not only valuable in itself, but valuable beyond all price from its position within our natural limits. It brought a foreign frontier—a *frontier of a non-slaveholding empire*—to the neighborhood of New Orleans, and almost to the heart of the valley of the Mississippi. It mutilated two of our great rivers—the Arkansas and the Red river—streams equal to the Danube, and both of which had their sources and their mouths within our natural boundaries, and were wholly ours by existing treaties; placed a foreign Power upon their banks, and gave to that Power a right, *according to our own assertion of the law of nations*—a right to navigate those rivers through our territories to their outlet in the sea. It gave away, not only the southern and sunny province of Texas, but what never was Texas, but a part of the valley of the Mississippi, lying between the Red river and the Arkansas, and extending to the hyperborean region of north latitude 42°. Finally, it established a desert region of great extent between the State of Missouri and the province of New Mexico, to interrupt and mar the inland commerce and the social intercourse between the United States and the Mexicans on the important line of communication between St. Louis and Santa Fe; and, to crown all these sacrifices of territory, rivers, and natural boundaries, they were made in favor of a *non-slaveholding* Power, whose dominions were thus brought in contact with the slaveholding State of Louisiana, and almost in contact with the slaveholding (then Territories, now) States of Missouri and Arkansas.

Such a sacrifice of great national interests, so unanimously concurred in by the public authorities, gave the first great shock to my confidence in public bodies; the treaty of the next year with the British Government, for the joint occupation of the Oregon, gave me the second great shock; and the two shocks together *shook* me so much that I came into public life, in 1820, with very little concern for my own position, when I should chance to find myself standing “*solitary and alone*” upon great national questions.

I came to the Senate of the United States in the fall of 1820, the recovery of Texas being a leading object in my mind; and the more so, because Missouri was the greatest sufferer by its loss. During Mr. Monroe's Administration, nothing could be done towards this recovery; for it was the same President and Cabinet which had just thrown away the country. In the commencement of Mr. Adams's Administration, Mr. Clay being Secretary of State, the first attempt was made to recover what had been lost, and I gave a faithful support to the effort, by writing articles in the newspapers to sustain and promote it. This effort was unsuccessful. General Jackson's Administration made the same attempt, and with the same result; and I need not repeat that I gave it a cordial support. In the sec-

and term of General Jackson's Administration the revolt of Texas took place, (1836,) and several gentlemen of the South were immediately in favor of availing ourselves of that event to recover possession of the lost territory. Recognition of Texan independence and admission of Texas into the Union (and this before Texas applied for admission) were urged by them as simultaneous acts—twin operations—to be accomplished together. I could not agree to it. Mexico and Texas were at war; and to admit Texas into our Union was to go to war with Mexico, with the faith of treaties and the opinion of the world against us. I could not go for admission; recognition was the furthest that I could venture; and that with some misgiving, at so early a stage of the contest, for fear of the effect it might have on our commerce with Mexico.

The next year, (1837,) being the first of Mr. Van Buren's Administration, a Texan minister (General Memucan Hunt) arrived here, to solicit the admission of his country into our Union. He did me the honor to speak to me on the subject, counting largely upon my co-operation, from the well-known detestation which I had expressed for the treaty which gave Texas away. But I told him from the beginning that it was impossible; that, much as I desired the restoration of Texas, my first duties were to my own country; that Mexico and Texas being at war, I could not jeopard the peace of the United States, compromise its honor in the eyes of nations, and injure its commerce, by taking a step which should give Mexico a right to treat us as an enemy. Mr. Van Buren's Administration gave the same answer; and all America approved it.

Thus, while being incontestably the first opponent to the loss of Texas, and the first advocate for its recovery, I have yet already twice found it impossible to support propositions for its admission into our Union; and that I may do justice to my own conduct,—may show that I am not a blind zealot, rushing-headlong to a favorite object, but a man of head and thought, considering what he is about, and striking a balance between the good and the evil of an important proposition—that I may do this, I will here present an extract from my speech in the Senate of the United States, on Friday, July 1st, 1836, on the resolution for the acknowledgment of the independence of Texas, and in which my policy, and that of the Administration, was faithfully sketched:

MR. BENTON rose, and said he should confine himself strictly to the proposition presented in the resolution, and should not complicate the abstract question of recognition with speculations on the future fate of Texas. Such speculations could have no good effect upon either of the countries interested—upon Mexico, Texas, or the United States. Texas has not asked for admission into this Union. Her independence is still contested by Mexico. Her boundaries, and other important points in her political condition, are not yet adjusted. To discuss the question of her admission into this Union, under these circumstances, is to treat her with disrespect, to embroil ourselves with Mexico, to compromise the disinterestedness of our motives in the eyes of Europe, and to start among ourselves prematurely, and without reason, a question which, whenever it comes, cannot be without its own intrinsic difficulties and perplexities.

The conduct of the Administration has been strictly neutral; and, as a friend to that Administration, and from my own convictions, I have conformed to its policy, avoiding the language which would irritate, and opposing the acts that might interrupt pacific and commercial communications. Mexico is our nearest neighbor, dividing with us the continent of North America, and possessing the elements of a great Power. Our boundaries are continuous for more than two thousand miles. We have inland and maritime commerce. She has mines; we have ships. General considerations impose upon each Power the duties of reciprocal friendship; especial inducements invite us to uninterrupted commercial intercourse. As a Western Senator, coming from the banks of the Mississippi, and from the State of Missouri, I cannot be blind to the consequences of interrupting that double line of inland and maritime commerce which, stretching to the mines of Mexico, brings back the perennial supply of solid money which enriches the interior, and enables New Orleans to purchase the vast accumulation of agricultural produce of which she is the emporium. Wonderful are the workings of commerce, and more apt to find out its own proper channels by its own operations than to be guided into them by the hand of legislation. New Orleans now is what the Havana once was—the entrepot of the Mexican trade, and the recipient of its mineral wealth. The superficial reader of commercial statistics would say that Mexico but slightly encourages our domestic industry; that she takes nothing from our agriculture, and but little from our manufactures. On

the contrary, the close observer would see a very different picture. He would see the products of our soil passing to all the countries of Europe, exchanging into fine fabrics, and these returning in the ships of many nations, our own predominant, to the city of New Orleans, and thence going off in small Mexican vessels to Matamoras, Tampico, Vera Cruz, and other Mexican ports. The return from these ports is in the precious metals; and, to confine myself to a single year, as a sample of the whole, it may be stated that, of the ten millions and three-quarters of silver coin and bullion received in the United States, according to the custom-house returns during the last year, eight millions and one quarter of it came from Mexico alone, and the mass of it through the port of New Orleans. This amount of treasure is not received for nothing; nor, as it would seem on the commercial tables, for foreign fabrics unconnected with American industry; but, in reality, for domestic productions changed into foreign fabrics, and giving double employment to the navigation of the country. New Orleans has taken the place of the Havana. It has become the entrepot of this trade; and many circumstances, not directed by law, or even known to lawgivers, have combined to produce the result. First, the application of steam power to the propulsion of vessels, which, in the form of tow-boats, has given to a river city a prompt and facile communication with the sea; then the advantage of full and assorted cargoes, which brings the importing vessel to a point where she delivers freight for two different empires; then, the marked advantage of a return cargo, with cheap and abundant supplies, which are always found in the grand emporium of the Great West; then the discriminating duties in Mexican ports in favor of Mexican vessels, which makes it advantageous to the importer to stop and tranship at New Orleans; finally, our enterprise, our police, and our free institutions—our perfect security, under just laws, for life, liberty, person, and property. These circumstances, undirected by Government, and without the knowledge of Government, have given to New Orleans the supreme advantage of being the entrepot of the Mexican trade, and have presented the unparalleled spectacle of the noblest valley in the world, and the richest mines in the world, sending their respective products to meet each other at the mouth of the noblest river in the world, and there to create, in lapse of time, the most wonderful city which any age or country has ever beheld. A look upon the map of the great West, and a tolerable capacity to calculate the aggregate of geographical advantages, must impress the beholder with a vast opinion of the future greatness of New Orleans; but he will only look upon one-half of the picture, unless he contemplates this new branch of trade, which is making the emporium of the Mississippi the entrepot of Mexican commerce and the recipient of the Mexican mines; and which, though now so great, is still in its infancy. Let not Government mar a consummation so auspicious in its aspect, and teeming with so many rich and precious results. Let no unnecessary collision with Mexico interrupt our commerce, turn back the streams of three hundred mines to the Havana, and give a wound to a noble city which must be felt to the head spring and source of every stream that pours its tribute into the king of floods.

From this extract, it will be seen that I then viewed the Texan question under all its aspects, and considered what was due to Mexico and the United States, as well as what I wished in relation to Texas itself. My aim was to accomplish eventual admission without a breach with Mexico—without compromising our national honor—with as little dissatisfaction as possible to any part of our own Union—and without the loss of the rich stream of gold and silver which the Mexican mines were annually pouring into New Orleans and the West. This was my wish and my effort; and putting off the question of admission, I voted for recognition, but not without serious misgivings that our known sympathy for the Texan cause, and the promptness of our acknowledgment of Texan independence, (notwithstanding the care of President Jackson and President Van Buren to observe the strictest neutrality, and to treat Mexico with all respect,) might have the effect of alienating Mexican feeling from us, and injuring the valuable trade which we carried on with the Mexican people. Events have shown that these misgivings, so strongly felt in 1836, were not without foundation. Every body knows that New Orleans has lost the Mexican trade—that the stream of the precious metals now flows to the mouth of the Thames, which but lately flowed from Tampico and Vera Cruz to the mouth of the Mississippi. Every body knows this, and the custom-house books prove it—those books, which show us an import of ten millions and three-quarters of specie from Mexico at the commencement of the Texan revolution, and of one million and a quarter for the year 1842—the last year to which the accounts have been made up!

Such has been my conduct, and the reasons for it, on the two occasions when the admission of Texas into our Union has been proposed, and when I have opposed both propositions. Now, a third proposition for admission is made, and under circumstances more formal and imposing than heretofore: it comes in the form of a

treaty laid before the Senate ; and what I shall do upon this treaty does not become me to say, standing as I do in an official relation to the question, and bound soon to act upon it. All that I shall say is, that I wish the discussions on the question of ratifying this treaty to be public—that the nature of the question, the manner in which it has been conducted heretofore, justice to the people, justice to individual Senators, the absurdity of a secret discussion in the Senate and a public discussion in the newspapers, the indisputable fact that jobbers, speculators, and intriguers, have known all along what was concealed from the people and their representatives—all these circumstances, and the prevention of future false reports of the action of the Senate for sinister purposes, (political, speculating, and stockjobbing,) require the action of the Senate to be public ; and I shall accordingly move to open its doors upon the discussion of the treaty, when it shall be taken up.

Leaving out of view, then, the treaty which is now before the Senate, and only looking to the general question, I can say, that I look to the recovery of Texas, and of our mutilated rivers and natural boundaries, as inevitable facts in the natural order of human events ; that they naturally belong to the valley of the Mississippi, and to the American Union, and will return to it with ease and honor if wise and temperate counsels prevail ; and that this natural consummation of a coming event can only be delayed for a time by throwing the question into our elections, perverting it from its national basis, making it sectional and partisan, prostituting it to unworthy purposes, running the question at men, and making it the means of disturbing the peace and harmony of the country.

Besides her general interest, as a member of the Union, in this great question, the State of Missouri, to which I belong, has a special interest in it, which doubly recommends it to my care. Texas, as constituted by the treaty of 1819, is protracted far to the north, and interposed between Missouri and Mexico. Its north-east corner is in latitude 38—the latitude almost of St. Louis ; its northwest corner is in latitude 42—the latitude of Cape Cod and Marblehead. All this northern half of Texas, thus protracted to the latitude of St. Louis and of Boston, and lying between Missouri and Mexico, is filled with treacherous savages and lawless white men, who make the merchant and his property their constant prey. Our inland trade to Mexico has to pass through this infested desert ; our Government cannot go there to give it protection ; and, since twenty years, this trade has suffered every variety of depredation. Many worthy citizens engaged in it have been killed ; much property has been plundered ; many Mexican merchants, coming to trade with us, have also been killed and robbed, and others deterred from coming ; and besides these actual losses, the trade has been prevented from increasing as it otherwise would have done, and can now only be carried on as in desert and barbarous countries, by armed caravans, fighting their way through a banditti of robbers and murderers. These evils result from the unfortunate treaty of 1819, and must be continued until the country dismembered from us by that treaty shall be restored to our Union.

For myself, it might be supposed that I take some pride in seeing so many marching up now to the point at which I stood “solitary and alone” twenty-five years ago ; but it is not so. I am too old for that puerility, and too much a friend to popular government to rejoice in any thing which is discreditable to it. A feeling of mortification rather oppresses me at the inconsistency and inconsiderateness which I have witnessed. When Texas was ours, free from debt and full of land, and might have been retained without a question from abroad, without dissension at home, and without the expense of a shilling—when this was the case, we threw the virgin province, as a worthless toy, away. Now, when eviscerated of her lands, and loaded with debt—when her recovery is attended with the danger of foreign war, the certainty of domestic discontent, the loss of commerce, and the disturbance of business—when this is the case, we are all of a sudden seized with a blind and furious passion to repossess her. Immediate annexation is the word, and we cannot even wait one brief year for the ripened pear to fall of itself into our hands.

This is inconsistent and discreditable, and implies levity and folly, instead of judgment and patriotism, in the conduct of our public affairs. Being a friend to popular government, and anxious for its honor and success, I regret as much to see the sudden passion of 1844 as I did to see the sluggish apathy of 1819. I wish to see Roman steadiness, and not Athenian levity, prevail in our Government; and, being myself a man of some temperance and stability, addicted to no paroxysms, and subject to no variations, I shall continue to advocate the recovery of our sacrificed territory, and mutilated rivers, and natural boundaries, in the same calm and considerate manner as for twenty-five years past.

With respect to Texas, her destiny is fixed. Of course I, who consider what I am about, always speak of Texas as constituted at the time of the treaty of 1819, and not as constituted by the Republic of Texas, comprehending the capital, and forty towns and villages of New Mexico, now and always as fully under the dominion of the Republic of Mexico as Quebec and all the towns and villages of Canada are under the dominion of Great Britain. It is of this Texas, the old Spanish Texas, of which I always speak; and of her I say, her destiny is fixed. Whatever may be the fate of the present movement, her destination is to return to her natural position—that of a part of the American Union. The interest of both parties requires it; and the same feeling and policy which made the Texan people desire it for eight years past, will make them continue to desire it until the reunion is accomplished. No earthly power, except Mexico, has a right to interfere in this question, and her right must soon cease. If she is wise, she will cease hostilities at once, acknowledge your independence, and rejoice to see you return to the American Union. If she is not wise, she may keep up a constructive war for some years, without making any thing by it; for nominal war, after the expiration of the present armistice, will answer no purpose. Spain refused to acknowledge the independence of Holland for seventy years after she was actually independent; that exhibition of Castilian pride and obstinacy made no difference in the rights of Holland, and in the conduct of Europe. From the time that actual war ceased, Holland was admitted by Europe to all the rights of an independent Power, without regard to the nominal pretensions of Spain; and so it was with the late Spanish provinces in the New World, and so it will be with Texas and Mexico. A short time, and either the acknowledgment of Mexico, or the consent of all nations, will give Texas all the rights of a sovereign Power; the question of admission will then be one of exclusive arrangement between the two countries; for no earthly power, except Mexico, has a right to interfere in this question, and, in fact, I know of no one that wishes to interfere in it. If kept free from sectional views, partisan politics, and selfish, personal, and sordid schemes, the reunion may then be easily effected, and in a way that ought to be satisfactory to the whole Union, though not without a heavy expense to the Federal Treasury. Come when it may, the cost of recovering this dismembered limb of Louisiana may equal, or exceed, the whole cost of the original acquisition of that vast province; such is the fruit of the unaccountable treaty of 1819. But the cost *in money* will be no obstacle to my action. Costs of a different kind are what I wish to avoid—costs in national honor, in foreign war, in ruined commerce, in domestic dissension, in sectional animosities, and in the disturbance of the harmony of the Union and the business of the people. The sacrifice of Texas was a calamitous blunder in 1819; let us not repeat the blunder, and double the calamity, by the *manner* of recovering it in 1844.

Respectfully, gentlemen, your obliged friend, who will be happy to salute you as his esteemed fellow-citizens,

THOMAS H. BENTON.

To Messrs. J. A. Green, G. A. Patillo, I. Parker, John Caldwell, James Webb, Wm. E. Jones, Thomas J. Green, Harvey Kendrick, Wm. L. Cazneau, James P. B. January, F. L. Paschal, Samuel A. Maverick, John W. Smith, Wm. L. Hunter, Edward Burleson, R. Scurry, James Davis, Joseph H. Barnard, H. K.

Person, J. W. Henderson, Jas. H. Johnston, L. W. Edwards, James Truitt, R. C. Doom, Elisha E. Lott, Wm. H. Bourland, Jos. L. Hogg, George B. Erath, J. W. Johnson, John Stamps, D. Gage, N. H. Darnell, R. W. Collins, J. A. Head, James Shaw, John Rügely, G. A. Parker, W. Lawrence, R. M. Williamson, David S. Kaufman, W. H. Jack, A. H. Philips, P. W. Cúny, L. S. Hagler, Levi Jones, W. M. Means, Andrew Rabb, M. Ward, and James Montgomery, members of the Congress of Texas.

MR. BARROW'S LETTER.

Address of Mr. Alexander Barrow, Senator from the State of Louisiana, to his Constituents, upon the annexation of Texas.

To the People of Louisiana :

FELLOW-CITIZENS : I have always been, and I trust I shall always be, ready to make known to my constituents, freely and unreservedly, the opinions I may entertain upon such subjects as may be brought before me as one of their Senators in Congress. In consonance with this rule of my political life, I am anxious to communicate to you, at the earliest moment propriety would permit, the reasons which have influenced me in my *fixed purpose* to vote against the ratification of the treaty now before the Senate for the annexation of Texas to the United States ; and I avail myself of this mode of address, in preference to the alternative of waiting for an opportunity to make a speech, which might be laid before you by the removal of the injunction of secrecy from our proceedings.

Permit me to say, in the outset, that, while I consider the manner of negotiating and consummating the treaty as highly exceptionable, and while I believe that the Executive and his advisers were influenced by the most selfish and ambitious motives in originating and completing it, and practised the grossest fraud upon the Executive of Texas to induce him to consent to the negotiation, I am free to admit that, had there existed no objections to the terms of the treaty, and none of a higher order emanating from our treaty obligations to Mexico, and had others, based upon considerations connected with our domestic and foreign policy, been removed, I might have felt it to be my duty to vote for the annexation of Texas. When the question was first presented to my mind, and before I had examined it in all its bearings and probable results, I confess that I thought favorably of annexation, and so expressed myself to several of my friends and associates ; but, after mature and calm reflection, I have arrived at the conclusion that there exists no state necessity for the measure, and that the ratification of the treaty now before the Senate would not only involve the nation in an unjust war, but would, in an especial manner, prostrate the best interests of Louisiana. These being my solemn convictions, I have not stopped to inquire what effect their avowal might have upon my popularity at home, as, however gratifying a coincidence of opinion between my constituents and myself might be, my own self-respect and the approval of my own conscience are still more important.

The ratification of the treaty of annexation, now before the Senate, will inevitably in my opinion, involve us in a war with Mexico, and, in all probability, in a war with England, and perhaps with France. Every well-wisher to the prosperity of our country would consider a war with the two latter Powers, or either of them, as a national calamity ; but in waging it, in the event supposed, no breach of treaties, no violation of the laws of nations, could be justly charged against us ; while in the contest with Mexico, our national honor would be tarnished, if not destroyed, by the infraction of solemn treaty stipulations. Is national honor nothing ? Are treaty obligations to be disregarded whenever it suits our convenience ? Are we pre-

pared to show to the world, by our acts, that we are ready at any time to wage an unjust war whenever we believe that we possess the physical power to gratify an insatiable lust for territory, or when we may consider that additional territory is needed to preserve a political equilibrium, or to interpose a protection to the peculiar institutions of the South, or for any other of the thousand purposes for which reckless ambition might suggest the acquisition of additional territory? Say that Texas is annexed with an eye to the preservation of the balance of political power, how many slave States can we make out of it? Four would be a liberal number. But, while we are carving out these States, would nothing be done in the Northwest? When the vast country north and west of Missouri, to the foot of the Rocky Mountains, comes to be peopled and formed into States, to say nothing of the Oregon Territory west of the mountains, what becomes of this equilibrium? To maintain it, we shall have to acquire, by war or otherwise, New Mexico, California, &c.; and, as our brethren at the North would probably be as anxious for the preservation of an equilibrium as ourselves, to what point would such a wild and monstrous doctrine lead us? To the purchase or conquest of Mexico on the one side, and of the Canadas on the other; while such a course of national policy, to say nothing of its iniquity, were war necessary to effectuate it, must bring about a combination of the civilized world against us, if not internal dissensions and a dissolution of the Union. Such a course would not be dissimilar from that I have sometimes known pursued by planters in the South, who, instigated by vanity or avarice, have gone on purchasing plantation after plantation, in order, as they said, to remove a troublesome neighbor or to *round off* their landed estate, until they have involved themselves inextricably in debt, and have terminated their ambitious efforts to acquire baronial estates in bankruptcy and utter ruin.

But this is not all. We know that, in some of the States, such as Kentucky and Tennessee, the disposition to get rid of their slaves, and to turn their attention to manufactures, is increasing; and that in others, such as Maryland and Virginia, slave labor produces but a small return upon the capital invested. It is from these States that the South has been principally supplied with the slaves that she needed. Let Texas be annexed, and such an opening will be presented that, in all probability, some, if not all of these States, will be drained of their slaves, as the South does not possess more, if as many as she requires, and would not be therefore able to furnish them. What, then, becomes of this bugbear of the balance of political power, should all or the most of these States join themselves, as in the course of time they would probably do, to the non-slaveholding States? The beam will be kicked with a vengeance, and we shall run the risk of losing from our side and support States already populous and influential, for the uncertain prospect of securing the aid of a country yet unsettled, and to settle which will necessarily weaken ourselves.

Let me examine this question, of a political balance, in another aspect. Southern gentlemen have affirmed, that unless Texas is annexed, the North will have the preponderance in both branches of Congress, and that then slavery will not be secure from the ruthless attacks of the abolitionists. My ancestors emigrated from England more than one hundred years ago, and settled in Virginia; and their descendants, without a single exception that I know of, have from that period resided in the slaveholding portion of the United States. The destiny of the South will be the destiny of my children. I am, moreover, one of those who believe that the physical and moral condition of the slaves of the South is superior to that of many of the manufacturing and laboring classes of the old and new world; and I do not believe that slavery is a political or moral evil. Whenever, therefore, the institution of slavery, guaranteed by the compact of our Union, shall be seriously assailed, I shall be found as ready to defend it, come from what quarter the attack may, as any of those who claim to be, *par excellence*, its peculiar guardians and protectors; many of whom, however, I must say, evince more zeal than judgment,

more bravado than true courage, in the course they pursue. Possessing, then, every motive, from birth, education, and long-cherished opinions and well-matured convictions, to say nothing of interest, to watch over and protect, as far as I am able, the institution of slavery, I am decidedly of opinion that the annexation of Texas to the United States will not give any additional security to the South; and that, on the contrary, our position will be weakened by such a measure. Let us suppose, for a moment, that there exists now, or may hereafter exist, a fixed purpose on the part of our brethren of the non-slaveholding States to abolish slavery, would the annexation of Texas arrest that purpose, or would it not rather stimulate it? Say that they are even at this moment resolved on the abolition of slavery in the United States; of course, they must be in favor of a dissolution of the Union, and to dissolve *that* at any time, for any cause, is to produce civil war. Any attempt on the part of the North to interfere with slavery must end in a disruption of the Union; and none know this fact better than our Northern brethren; and none, I am sure, would deprecate such a result more than they. Interest, to say nothing of patriotism, would forbid such an idea. The love of the Union is as strong in the North as in the South; its dissolution would prove more disastrous to that portion of the country than to ours; and I must have stronger evidence than I now possess before I can believe in the existence of any serious or general wish in the non-slaveholding States to destroy the Union—before I will consent to accuse them of forgetting the example of a noble ancestry, of degenerating from men whose names cluster in a glorious constellation around the era of the formation of the Constitution—before, in short, I can bring myself to brand them with the odious name of traitors. But, admit that the Hotspurs and Don Quixotes of the South are right, and that I am wrong in my opinion as to the wishes and intentions of the people of the North on this subject, we ought then to expect civil war, and prepare for it. In the event of such a war, would not the South be weaker with its white and slave population scattered over a territory stretching from the Delaware bay to the Rio del Norte, than it would be were they confined to their present limits? Our population would be more sparse, the frontier to be defended double in length, the difficulty and expense of assembling troops and concentrating the munitions of war greatly increased. Any military man, as well as common sense, will tell you that it would be a much easier matter successfully to defend, against the assaults of a formidable Power, the other slave States, were the white and black population of Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Missouri, removed within the limits of the other eight slave States, than to defend the present thirteen slave States. Any person who would contend that it would be as easy to defend, with the same or nearly the same means, a large and extended frontier, as a comparatively small and contracted one, must either be a fool himself, or expect others to be so.

In my opinion, fellow-citizens, the idea that the immediate union of Texas with the United States will give greater security to our slave institutions, is about as ridiculous as was the promise made by the friends of "the Northern man with Southern principles," that he would, should it become necessary—that is, if a majority of Congress declared against us—interpose his *veto* to save us. They seemed to forget that when such a crisis arrived a dissolution would have virtually taken place, and that the South would have had to rely upon something else besides the ineffectual and empty arguments of a *veto*—particularly such a one as their candidate would have written, if we may judge from many of the political papers that have emanated from him, in which he has generally held out his left hand stealthily to the South, while his right was extended with as much directness as he could assume, to be grasped by the North. We did not allow ourselves to be duped in the one case, and we should determine not to be led astray or deceived in the other. To prevent a dissolution, and to protect the interests of the South, we have, thank God, more to rely upon than the promises of the "Northern man with Southern principles," or the chimerical expectations of the friends of immediate annexation.

The glorious compact which was bequeathed to us by a common ancestry must be disregarded and trampled in the dust; patriotism, which, however others may think, I believe still burns with as bright a flame in the North as in any other portion of the Union, must be extinguished; self-interest, which often influences men whom no other feeling can reach, must be forgotten, before the non-slaveholding States can consent to interfere with and destroy our privileges and property. But should all these considerations fail—should our Northern brethren, carried away by a blind fanaticism, forgetful of justice, right, and country, of all the advantages of Union, of the glory we have achieved under the same “star-spangled banner,” be willing to undertake to interfere with or overturn slavery, we shall then have but one last resort—one melancholy alternative—*we must rely upon our own stout arms and brave hearts for the defence of our property and firesides.*

I am not one of those who believe in the notion industriously propagated by the friends of annexation, that, if the treaty is rejected, the Texans will unite themselves with, or sell their slaves to, England. The present population of Texas consists principally, almost entirely, of emigrants from the slaveholding States of our Union. By education, by habit, they are favorable to and believe in the necessity of slave labor, and they would be as prompt to repel any attack upon the institution of slavery as ourselves. To assume, therefore, that the Texans are prepared to form an alliance with England, upon the condition of the abolition of slavery for a stipulated price, is to assume that the whole of the present population are prepared to abandon Texas, and to remove either to Great Britain or to the free States of this Union; for no *Southern* man can for a moment imagine that they will remain in a country where their slaves have become their *equals*. Equally violent is the presumption that the Texans are prepared, or could be induced, to sell their slaves to England, with the intention of becoming residents of the slaveholding States of the Union; for it can hardly be supposed that they would be willing or weak enough to sell their negroes to England for \$200 each, when they would have to pay \$500 each for those they might need in the country of their adoption. This idea, therefore, is not well founded, but highly absurd, and a gross insult to Texas. We were told the same thing in 1837, when Texas applied for admission into the Union. The accusation was false then, and the prediction will prove equally false now. England, moreover, as Lord Aberdeen informs us, is desirous of the separate and independent existence of Texas, and we have good reason to believe that such is the wish of France. We have no right to doubt the sincerity of these great Powers, but, at the same time, I think it the duty of our Government to make known to them and to the world, that any attempt on their part, or on the part of any other European Power, to colonize Texas, or to interfere in her internal affairs, or to take her under their peculiar protection, will be considered an aggression by the United States, dangerous to our peace and safety, and will be resisted accordingly.

By this much-talked-of treaty, the United States will be bound to assume the debt of Texas, “should it not exceed ten millions of dollars.” Although this particular sum be specified, will we not be obliged to assume the debt, even should it amount to fifty millions? And are you prepared to add so greatly to your present indebtedness, or in order to get rid of it would you be willing to resort to the cheap and easy mode of *repudiation*? Strange things sometimes occur in political life; and had I not become fully aware of this fact, I should have been astonished at the effrontery with which some of the friends of Texas advocate the assumption of its debt, at the same time that they cannot listen with patience to any proposition which might be made for the arrangement or payment of the debt owing by some of the States already enclosed within the pale of the Union, and which, one might think, would be first entitled to their sympathies.

Having thus glanced, fellow-citizens, at these points of general interest to our country, let us look a little into the effects of annexation upon Louisiana, as a cot-

ton and sugar producing State. It is my deliberate opinion, that, should the treaty be ratified, the lands of Louisiana will be reduced *seventy-five per cent.* in value, and our great staples *fifty per cent.* Emigration to Louisiana from the Atlantic slaveholding States will cease—in fact, we may expect partial emigration from Louisiana to Texas. This being the case, where shall we find a market for our improved or unimproved lands? An improved tract of land now worth fifty thousand dollars would not command twenty thousand, as no purchasers could be found. To what a condition would this state of things reduce the indebted portion of our people, who might wish to sell, or whose estates might be sold under execution? The effect upon the price of sugar and cotton will be equally as great. We know from actual experiment that sugar of the best quality can be made in Texas, and that the climate of that country is more favorable to its production than that of Louisiana. Can, then, a Louisiana planter, whose land has cost him fifty dollars per acre, expect to compete successfully with his rival in Texas, who removes from Virginia, and buys his land at one dollar and twenty-five cents per acre? The same may be said of the competition of the Texan cotton planter. The land would be much cheaper, and the climate and soil as well, if not better, adapted to its cultivation. But there yet remains a more important consideration, and one which more seriously affects our interest as sugar and cotton planters; and that is, the rapid and immense addition which would be made to the quantity of our staples. If the treaty be ratified, there can be no doubt that in the next three years two hundred and fifty thousand working hands will be introduced into Texas from the United States, and principally from sections of the slaveholding States producing no sugar, and but little cotton. This force employed in Texas, say two hundred thousand hands in the cultivation of cotton and fifty thousand in the cultivation of sugar, will be the means of adding one million of bales of cotton and one hundred and fifty thousand hogsheads of sugar to the present overgrown crops; and these will be produced by laborers not now producing more than one hundred thousand bales of the former and none of the latter. What must inevitably be the result of this great addition to the quantity of our staples? Most assuredly, a reduction in each of more than *fifty per cent.* And are you prepared to suffer to this extent, to aid in the accomplishment of a measure by which so many evils may be inflicted upon the nation at large, and from which you can derive, as I have endeavored to show, no corresponding advantage?

I have thus, fellow-citizens, presented to you, in my "plain unvarnished" way, the views I entertain upon a question which, I am compelled to believe, has been agitated, in its inception and progress, rather with a view to the gratification of selfish ambition and the attainment of power, than to promote the interests and harmony of the whole country. And, in conclusion, I would ask you to pause and reflect, as I have done, before you allow yourselves to be carried away by the specious but false arguments of the advocates of this measure. I would ask, too, if immediate annexation is of such overwhelming importance that we should be ready to sacrifice for its attainment those great principles—such as a national currency, a tariff, a distribution of the public lands—for which we have so long and so manfully contended? To obtain Texas, which can be obtained at this time only with danger and dishonor, are you willing to throw overboard these and the other principles of the Whig party, and to toss after them THE MAN who is their truest and best representative?

ALEXANDER BARROW.

WASHINGTON, May 24, 1844.